

NW-81-13 APPEAL

JUL 6 1962

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Arms Control Aspects of Proposed Satellite
Reconnaissance Policy

Recommendations 18 and 19 of the "Report on Political and Informational Aspects of Satellite Reconnaissance Policy" call attention to two issues on which the agencies concerned have been unable to reach agreement. The views of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency are summarized below.

Advance Notification of Launchings

The Geneva Conference has agreed to discuss separate measures to reduce the risk of war through accident, miscalculation or failure of communication. The purpose of such measures would be to provide reassurance among states and to hold to the minimum the hazards that might arise from misinterpretation of abrupt acts of a military but non-belligerent character. Measures designed for this purpose might involve arrangements for advance notification of certain types of military movements and maneuvers, including advance notification of missile launchings, a measure already suggested by the Swedish Delegation, and possibly advance notification of space vehicle launchings as well.

Recommendation 18 of the Satellite Reconnaissance Report would preclude the United States from making or endorsing proposals for advance notification of missile and space vehicle launchings. In the case of space vehicle launchings, the recommendation is based on the contention that advance notification would facilitate passive and active countermeasures against reconnaissance satellites. Advance notification of missile launchings is presumably ruled out because space vehicle launchings might become a collateral issue.

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USACDA Ltr. (NW-81-13 APPEAL)
BY hmt/m NARS, DATE 4/30/81

ACDA does not wish to underestimate the counter-measures problem, but we have difficulty in assigning it over-riding significance. Past and continuing publicity respecting reconnaissance satellites is sufficient to have aroused Soviet interest in the possibility of countermeasures. If passive countermeasures are practical, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Soviet Union may undertake them whether or not advance notification is provided. In so far as active countermeasures are concerned, it is not evident that advance notification need be so precise as to result in the pin-pointing of targets in outer space. To the extent that such notification might serve

such maneuvers as
launching schedules might be employed
with a view to effecting some attrition

measure to reduce the risk of war in order to destroy or neutralize a peaceful United States satellite, a variety of responses would be available, including a strengthened basis for United States political opposition to such acts.

We may not, in fact, be able to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on any type of advance notification. However, an affirmative United States position would be consistent with our view that the objects we place in orbit represent legitimate uses of outer space. By carrying our concern regarding our space vehicles to the point where we are unwilling to discuss advance notification of missile launchings, we may encourage the conclusion that we are attempting to shield activities which we ourselves regard as suspect. It is difficult to see how such an approach could contribute to the political and legal defense of satellite reconnaissance.

Furthermore, a separate measure for advance notifications of missile and space launchings, if agreed to by the United States and the Soviet Union, would constitute an important step in the arms control field. First, it would give greater assurance that a surprise missile attack could not take place in a way that would catch the U.S. off guard. Secondly, by having advance notifications of such launchings, each party to the agreement would have a good record of the other party's planned programs in the space and missile fields, including both test programs and possible programs

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for the further deployment of missiles. Third, advance notifications of missile and space launchings would decrease tension that is bound to come as the United States and the Soviet Union, and possibly other countries as well, increase the number of missiles at their disposal. The more information that can be obtained about the intentions of potentially hostile parties, as the United States and the Soviet Union increase their dependence on missiles for military purposes, the less likely it will be that one or the other party will miscalculate and possibly start or escalate a war with missiles.

There are issues of greater consequence than measures "to reduce the risk of war." However, other things being equal, it would seem desirable that the United States seek limited gains in the arms control field as well as major ones. ACDA is not convinced that the arguments supporting Recommendation 18 outweigh these against it, and recommends that it be disapproved.

Prohibition of Bombs in Orbit

The Canadian Foreign Minister has pressed at Geneva for consideration of a separate measure to prohibit the placing in orbit of weapons of mass destruction (it is perhaps worth noting that the United States is currently pressing for a tracking station] to support military space programs). The United States has expressed willingness to discuss the possibility of such a separate measure, provided that it take the form of an agreement which would be subject to inspection. To date, the Soviet Union has opposed consideration of the matter except in connection with general and complete disarmament. Recommendation 19 of the Satellite Reconnaissance Report raises a question as to whether we should continue to pursue our present course.

ACDA believes that if an agreement could be reached to prohibit the placing in orbit of weapons of mass destruction, such an agreement would be in the interest of the national security. To prevent extension of the arms race to outer space should be an important objective of arms control, and hence national security policy. This conclusion appears valid even if such an agreement were fully effective only against very large and hence very high yield weapons such as those tested by the Soviet Union in its last test series. The fact that the Soviet

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Union would gain increased knowledge of our satellite reconnaissance capabilities does not seem a compelling argument against our acceptance of inspection procedures, particularly in view of the present Soviet ability to estimate these capabilities with a substantial degree of accuracy, a fact that is noted in the Satellite Reconnaissance Report.

The basic objection to the present United States position of willingness to consider a separate outer space agreement appears to rest primarily on the argument that discussion of a separate agreement might involve the United States, to its tactical disadvantage, in a public airing of the satellite reconnaissance issue.

The Soviet Union has, of course, already raised this issue not only in its propaganda output but also in private conversations with the United States and in discussions in the context of the United Nations Outer Space Committee. Ambassador Stevenson is concerned that the issue may be raised in the General Assembly. There is good reason for such concern since the public record affords ample "evidence" to support a strong political attack. Under these circumstances, the question may be where, not whether, the United States may have to debate the matter.

We may not be able to prevent the Soviet Union from speaking out in the forum of its choice, but if we continue to maintain that limitations on military uses of outer space are arms control matters and that Geneva is the proper place to discuss them, we will have a reasonable tactical basis for declining to join issue in the Outer Space Committee or the General Assembly. We will also have reasonable procedural grounds for ignoring, if not defeating, condemnatory principles of space law or hortatory resolutions which might embarrass the satellite reconnaissance program.

In view of the foregoing considerations, ACDA strongly urges that approval be given to an effort on the part of the United States to seek a separate agreement to prohibit the placing in orbit of weapons of mass destruction.

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